

Old church now used as museum

Continued from Page 12B

July 10, 1756, "the vestry agreed with James Johnson to build a Church forty four foot square where the old Chapel stands for Eighty five thousand three hundred pound of Tobacco."

For 1,600 years, Christians worshipped in the east direction toward a high altar and they believed they were seeing the rebirth of the Lord, Olmert said. It was about worshipping a God and having the opportunity for eternal life.

Changes occurred in Christian worship and the focus was no longer on Mass and Holy Communion, but preaching. Instead of preaching at the east end, Olmert said, a pulpit was placed in the middle of the church to be close to the people so there would not be a notable difference between the preacher and the people. The pulpits were usually centered along the long north or south walls.

St. Martin's pulpit was in the center and exists today, Olmert said, as an interesting and rare survival of a Stuart church, where emphasis was on preaching instead of the sacrifice of the mass.

At the beginning of the Victorian era, the Church of England reconfigured churches. Pulpits were taken down and altars were put at the east end. The pulpit at St. Martin's was taken down.

Eventually, the congregation diminished in size and weekly services ceased. They were replaced with yearly commemorative gatherings in the late 19th century.

During the restoration of St. Martin's in the 1990s, people could see evidence of



PHOTO COURTESY MICHAEL OLMERT

Dr. Michael Olmert will speak from this podium at St. Martin's Church on Sunday.

what a Stuart church should look like, and the people restoring the building placed the pulpit back in the middle.

St. Martin's is a great example because it is one of the few churches where the change can be seen. It is, Olmert said, "a remarkable historical revival."

The restoration of St. Martin's was completed in 2001 and now the church serves as the St. Martin's Episcopal Church Museum. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Olmert, a two-time Emmy award winner for his documentaries on natural history, is a professor at the University of Maryland.

The public is welcome to the church Sunday for Olmert's discussion. For more information, contact Sherrie Beckstead at 410-430-2142 or historicstmartin@aol.com.



OCEAN CITY TODAY/NANCY POWELL

The historic St. Martin's Church, located on Route 113 at the intersection of Route 589 in Showell, is now a museum and the site of various special events.

St. Martin's Church architectural history subject of Sunday speech

NANCY POWELL

■ Associate Editor

(Aug. 27, 2010) The historic St. Martin's Episcopal Church will this weekend welcome a renowned historian and author, who will discuss architecture and worship in historic churches.

Michael Olmert, an English literature professor at the University of Maryland, will discuss architecture and worship at the church, located on Route 113 at the intersection of Route 589 in Showell, at

4:30 p.m. Sunday. He will illustrate his talk with slides showing the evolution of architecture and modes of Christian worship in the 17th and 18th centuries, with special attention to elements of that change at St. Martin's.

The church, Olmert said, is one of very few churches where the change in styles of worship is visible. Founded in 1756 and completed in 1759, it was the first parish church of Worcester Parish. According to vestry minutes of Worcester Parish for See **OLD** on Page 15B